

Two constraints on theme passivisation in Swedish

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Introduction: The passive symmetry problem

- **Focus:** Cross-linguistic/cross-dialectal variation in the availability of theme passivisation out of a double object construction (DOCs) (Anagnostopoulou, 2003; Baker, 1988; Doggett, 2004; Larson, 1988; McGinnis, 1998, 2001; Woolford, 1993).

(1) *Double object construction* (DOC)

- | | | |
|----|-------------------------------------|-----------|
| a. | Obelix handed Asterix the potion. | [Active] |
| b. | _____ was handed Asterix the potion | [Passive] |

Asymmetric passive languages

- Allow *only the goal argument* to passivize.
- Fula, Swahili, German, Chichewa, Danish (Baker, 1988; Bresnan and Moshi, 1990; Postal, 2004; Woolford, 1993).

(2) *Danish* (Holmberg and Platzack, 1995)

- a. Jens blev givet bog-en.
 Jens was given book-the
 ‘Jens was given book-the.’
- b. *Bog-en blev givet Jens.

(3) *Am. English*

- a. Asterix was given the potion.
- b. *The potion was given Asterix.

Symmetric passive languages

- Allow *both goal and theme arguments* to passivize.
- Norwegian, Swedish, Br. English dialects, Kinyarwanda (Baker, 1988; McGinnis, 1998, 2001; Woolford, 1993).

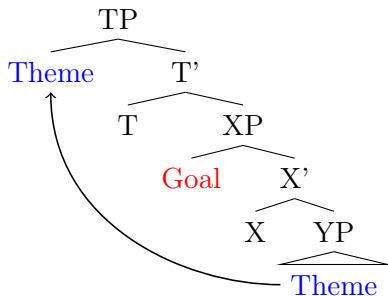
(4) *Norwegian*

- a. **Jens** ble gitt **bok-en**.
 Jens was given book-the
 ‘Jens was given book-the.’
- b. **Bok-en** ble gitt **Jens**.

The locality approach

- In asymmetric passive languages, theme-passivization blocked by goal (Anagnostopoulou, 2003; Doggett, 2004; McGinnis, 1998, 2001; Jeong, 2007; Ura, 1996).

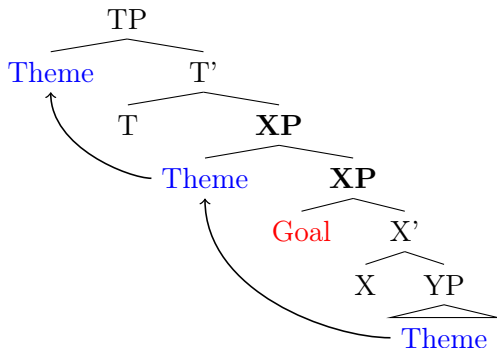
(5) *Asymmetric passive languages*



The locality approach

- Symmetric languages have an “escape hatch.”

(6) *Symmetric passive languages*



Evidence for escape hatch movement

■ Object shift in Mainland Scandinavian

(Anagnostopoulou, 2003, 2005; Bobaljik, 2002, 2005; Josefsen, 2003).

(7) *Danish* (Anagnostopoulou, 2005)

- a. Peter viste **hende** **den** jo.
 Peter showed her it indeed
 'Peter indeed showed it to her.'
- b. *Peter viste **den** **hende** jo.

(8) *Norwegian*

- a. Elsa ga **ham** **den** ikke.
 Elsa gave him it not
 'Elsa didn't give him it.'
- b. %Elsa ga **den** **ham** ikke.

Evidence for escape hatch movement

- **Theme-passivization and Theme-Goal OS in Mainland Scandinavian** (Anagnostopoulou, 2003, 2005; Bobaljik, 2002, 2005).

	Theme passives	Theme-Goal Object Shift
Swed./Norw.	OK	some spkrs.
Danish	No	No

Evidence for escape hatch movement

- **Theme-passivization and Theme-Goal orders in Br. English dialects** (Anagnostopoulou, 2003; Doggett, 2004; Haddican, 2010; Haddican and Holmberg, 2012; Woolford, 1993).

(9) *Passives*

- %The **potion** was given **Asterix**.
- Asterix** was given **the potion**.

(10) *Actives*

- %She gave **it him**.
- She gave **him it**.

Two shortcomings of locality approach

- i. In Norwegian and BrE, acceptance of theme-goal orders in actives and passives don't co-vary across speakers (Haddican and Holmberg, 2012, 2014).
- ii. In BrE theme-goal ditransitives in active contexts, the Theme must be pronominal, but themes in spec,TP need not be. The locality approach has trouble expressing this pronoun/DP contrast *only in active contexts*.

(11) The book/It was given Obelix [~~the book~~/it].

(12) I gave *the book/it Obelix [~~the book~~/it].

A new case-based approach

- Haddican and Holmberg (2012, 2014) propose a variant of the classic case-based approach to theme passives (Roberts, 1987; Baker, 1988; Larson, 1988; Pesetsky, 1996; Holmberg, 2001).
- Theme passives have a linker head, which probes the goal (Baker and Collins, 2006). In passives, where *v* assigns no case, the theme raises to T.

(13) [TP Theme [vP v [VP V [LkP Lk [ApplP Goal Theme]]]]]

└──────────┘↑

- The Goal argument, inactive by the time T is merged, does not defectively intervene between T and Theme (Richards, 2004; Broekhuis, 2007; Bruening, 2014).
- Theme-goal constructions in active contexts have an independent source.

A verb class effect in Swedish

- Swedish sometimes described as a “symmetric passive” language, but theme-passives typically marginal (Lundquist, 2014).

(14) ??Pris-et gav-s poj-k-en.
 prize-DEF give.PST-PASS boy-DEF
 ‘The prize was given the boy.’

- Holmberg and Platzack (1995) report that theme passives are better with a class of bi-morphemic verbs, including *till-dela*, ‘award, lit. to-share’, *till-skriva*, ‘ascribe, lit. to-write’, and *för-ära* ‘award, lit. for-honor’.

(15) Pris-et **till**-dela-de-s poj-k-en.
 prize-DEF to-share-PST-PASS boy-DEF
 ‘The prize was given the boy.’

A verb class effect in Swedish

- The first morphemes in these verbs *till* and *för* are homophonous with forms that, in other contexts are prepositions, counterpart to English *to* and *for*.

- (16)
- a. till Paris
to Paris
'to Paris'
 - b. för pojk-en
for boy-the
'for the boy'

A verb class effect in Swedish

- From the perspective of Haddican and Holmberg (2012, 2014), a possibility that arises is that *till* and *för* are overt counterparts of the silent linker morphemes posited for BrE and Norwegian.
- An additional difference between Swedish and Norwegian would be that this linker morpheme only accompanies certain verbs.

(17) [_{VP} v [_{VP} *delä* [_{LkP} *till-* [_{ApplP} Goal Theme]]]]

A'-movement rescues theme passives

- In addition, relatives selectively ameliorate theme-passivization (Holmberg and Platzack, 1995; Lundquist, 2014)

(18) *Ingrid såg pojk-en som gav-s priset.
 Ingrid saw boy-the that gave-PASS prize-the
 'Ingrid saw the prize that was given the boy.'

(19) Ingrid såg priset som gavs pojken.
 Ingrid saw prize-the that gave-PASS boy-the
 'Ingrid saw the boy that was given the prize.'

- The contrast between relative and non-relative contexts suggests that A-bar movement is crucial to the availability of theme-passivization.

Main goals of talk

- This paper reports on a judgment survey focusing on the two above effects.
- *Two main claims:*
 - 1 Results from Swedish provide positive evidence that the availability of theme-passivization is conditioned by the presence of an additional source of case for objects as suggested by (Haddican and Holmberg, 2012, 2014).
 - 2 Results corroborate observations by Holmberg and Platzack (1995) and Lunquist (2014) that A'-movement repairs theme-passives with verb classes that normally disallow such constructions. Despite appearances, this is not an instance of locality obviation.

Method: subjects

- 101 self-described native speakers of Swedish, 66 F, 35 M.
- 22-87 ($M=38.4$, $SD=12.0$).
- Subjects recruited online by researchers. We did not require subjects to be linguistically naive.

Method: procedure

- Self-paced online survey in Fall 2014 using Ibex Farm (Drummond, 2013)
- Subjects judged sentences on 11-point (0-10) scale, with endpoints labeled *dålig* ‘bad’ and *bra* ‘good’ respectively.
- Results normalized by converting to z-scores based on by-speaker means and standard deviations of fillers.



Dottern lämnades bostaden.



Klicka på en av rutorna för att ge betyg till meningen ovanför

Results

- No strong geographic effect.
- Hotter colors → tendency toward theme-goal orders (by-subject random intercepts).
- No sex/age effects.
- No register effect.

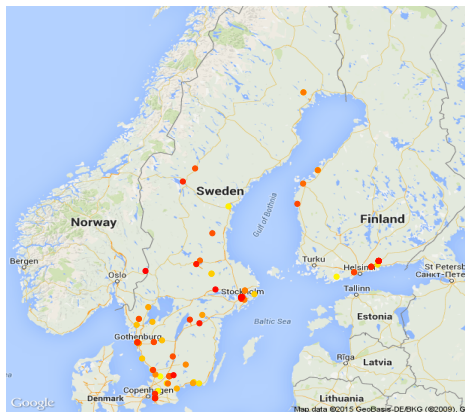


Figure 1: Tendency toward theme-goal order in passives

Results

- Bimorphemic verbs make both object orders better (relative to monomorphemic verbs)
- Bimorphemic verbs improve theme-passives a bit more than goal-passives.

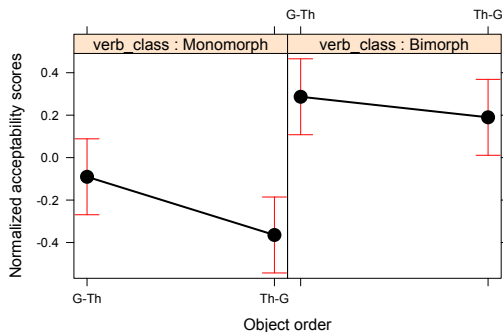
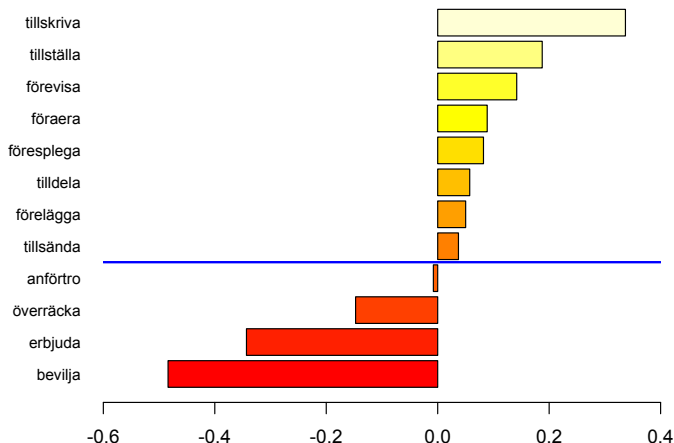


Figure 2: Estimated effects and CI's for 4 conditions

Item analysis

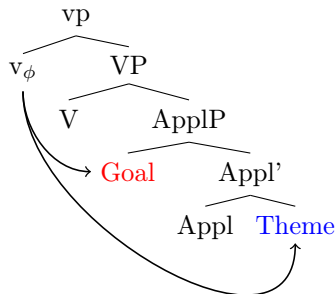
- *Till-* and *för-* favor theme-goal orders most strongly.



Monomorph. verbs, Grammar 1: multiple agree

- v probes both objects—"Multiple agree"(Anagnostopoulou, 2003; Nevins, 2007, 2011)
- In passives, this head assigns no case and one object is left case-less.
- Hence, degradation of both theme and goal passives with monomorphemic verbs.

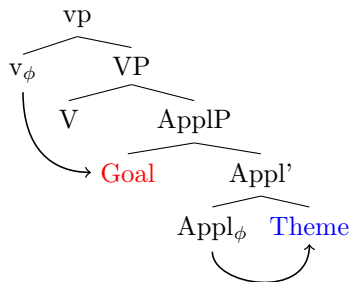
(20) *Monomorph. verbs, Gr. 1*



Monomorph. verbs, Grammar 2: Appl and v as probes

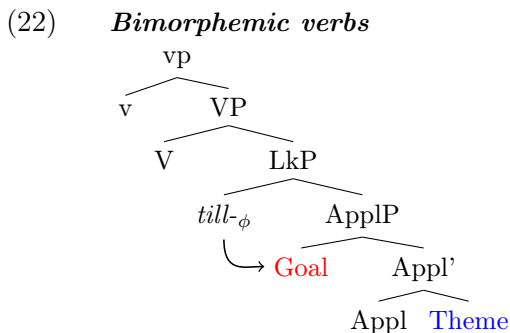
- Something else is needed to model relative improvement of goal passives.
- Let's assume a competing grammar with Appl as a probe as in e.g. Standard English.

(21) *Monomorph. verbs, Gr. 2*



Bimorphemic verbs: Linker head

- Morphemes *till-* and *för-* are linkers selected only by certain verbs.
 - One position for these morphemes is outside Appl.
- This will make possible theme passivization.

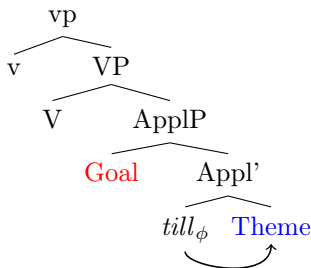


Bimorphemic verbs: Linker head

- A second possible position is in Appl.
- This explains the fact that bimorphemic verbs facilitate goal passives (relative to monomorphemic verbs).

(23)

Bimorphemic verbs



Awkward relatives

- Relative to root contexts, goal passives get worse and theme passives get better.

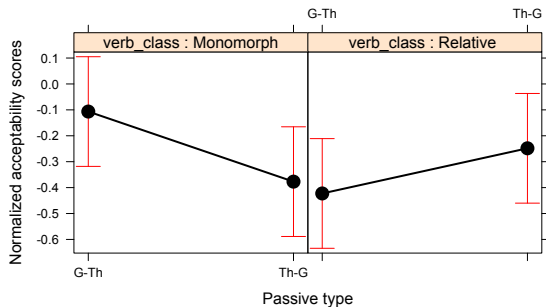


Figure 4: Estimated effects and CI's for 4 conditions

Other A'-movement contexts

- Availability of other kinds of A'-extraction seems to vary across speakers.

(24) *Wh-questions*

%Vilket pris gav-s pojken?
 which prize gave-PASS boy-DEF
 'Which prize was given the boy?'

(25) *Quotatives*

%“Det kostar för mycket”_i Op_i berättades det Johan.
 that costs too much told.PASS EXPL Johan
 “‘That costs too much,’ John was told.’

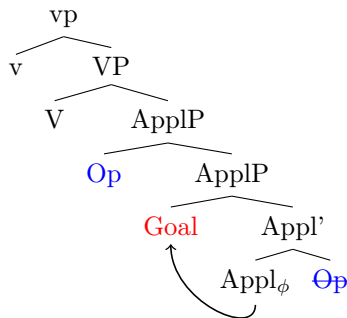
Asymmetry in A'-extraction

- Degradation of goal passives reflects ban on A'-extraction of DOC recipients. (Hornstein and Weinberg, 1981; Baker, 1988; Den Dikken, 1995; Hallman, 2015).
- Raising of derived subject *wh*-phrases obeys this constraint, unlike in English (perhaps because subject *wh*-phrases unambiguously move to CP in Swedish, but not in English. (Chomsky, 1986)).
- ApplP is a phase. Operator theme raises there before Appl assigns case—perhaps because Appl needs *v* to assign case.

Asymmetry in A'-extraction

- A source of case is needed for the goal argument. We noted above that Appl can (marginally for many speakers) be a probe.
- We assume that Appl can probe the goal argument in its spec, when relieved of its responsibility to value case on the theme (Béjar and Rezac, 2009).

(26) *Monomorph. verbs, Gr. 2*



Main claims

■ *Two main claims:*

- 1 Results from Swedish provide positive evidence that the availability of theme-passivization is conditioned by the presence of an additional source of case for objects as suggested by (Haddican and Holmberg, 2012, 2014).
- 2 Results corroborate observations by Holmberg and Platzack (1995) and Lunquist (2014) that A'-movement repairs theme-passives with verb classes that normally disallow such constructions. Despite appearances, this is not an instance of locality obviation.

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